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ABSTRACT

This Vocational Education Resource Package (VERP) was developed to provide materials useful in replicating an exemplary vocational education program for special student populations in the California Community Colleges. This VERP provides information on Career Beginnings, an exemplary program for disadvantaged students, originally developed at Brandeis University's Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives and now instituted at Rancho Santiago College, in Santa Ana, California, among other national sites. Part I is a general overview of the VERP project, including a list of the packages produced. Part II presents an overview of the program, including its history, applicability, activities, overall effectiveness, and main features. Part III is a "Practitioner's Guide" to the Career Beginnings program. The guide focuses on studies and evaluations of the program since its inception. Three studies are thoroughly outlined and explained: an Experimental Impact Study; a Process Study to evaluate program implementation; and a Survey of the Mentoring Aspect of the overall program. This section covers all aspects of effectiveness, impact, and usefulness of the program. A copy of the Career Beginnings National Student Magazine is also included. The magazine focuses on individual students and their feelings about the program and gives an update on new developments at program sites across the nation. (YLB)

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VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
RESOURCE PACKAGE

# CAREER BEGINNINGS

This package is designed to facilitate the adoption of
a program for disadvantaged students developed at
The Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives, Brandeis University
and implemented at
Rancho Santiago Community College
Santa Ana, California

Prepared for the
Chancellor's Office, California Community Colleges

by

Evaluation and Training Institute
Los Angeles, California
1991

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# PART I: GENERAL OVERVIEW

## INTRODUCTION

Vocational Education Resource Packages (VERPs) contain information necessary for the adoption and implementation of existing exemplary vocational education programs at the California Community Colleges. These programs target special student populations: disabled students; single parents and displaced homemakers; disadvantaged students; and, those with limited English proficiency. VERPs enable the dissemination of these special programs to interested colleges and provide a model and resource materials for their adoption. This VERP provides information on Carreer Beginnings, an exemplary program for disadvantaged students, originally developed at Brandeis University's Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives and now instituted at a number of institutions, including Rancho Santiago College.

## HISTORY OF VERPs

The Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (VEA) of 1984 placed a dominant emphasis on providing access to quality programs to groups of students traditionally underrepresented students in vocational education. A Planning and Future Study Committee consisting of representatives of the Chancellor's Office and local colleges predicted that the numbers of special population students at the community colleges, including the disabled, the disadvantaged, single parent/displaced homemaker, and limited English proficient, will grow significantly over the remainder of this century. In early 1990, as one effort to serve these categories of students, the Chancellor's Office funded a VEA special project to develop and disseminate a comprehensive resource model for special student populations. This VERP is a final product of that project.

## DEVELOPMENT OF VERPs

Model programs were identified through a variety of methods: a phone survey of all 107 California community colleges identified a number of prospects; Chancellor's Office Special Projects were reviewed for their potential; and nominations were made by the members of the project Advisory Committee. Materials were requested on these programs and follow-up calls were made to gather additional information. The following criteria were used to determine if a program was eligible for development as a VERP: 1) the program had documentation; 2) there was evidence of its

effectiveness, usefulness or impact; 3) it had been developed, at least in part, with VEA funds; 4) it possessed the ability to be transported to and implemented at other colleges; 5) the program had been developed since 1980; and, 6) it targeted at least one of the four special student populations.

From the programs that were identified, the Advisory Committee selected 10 exemplary programs for development as VERPs. The developer's materials, existing program documentation, and other useful supplemental materials are included for use in replicating the program.

## VERPs THAT WERE PRODUCED

The following 10 VERPs were produced:

### I. For Displaced Homemakers and Single Parents:

SPACE II - Single Parent Adults Choosing Education

### II. For Disadvantaged Students:

A. Career Beginnings

B. IN-D'MAND - Internships for Disabled, Minority, and Disadvantaged Students

### III. For Limited English Proficient Students:

A. AERO - Advancement of Ethnic Representation and Opportunity

B. Bilingual Welding and Automotive

C. Outreach and Orientation for ESL Students

### IV. For Disabled Students:

A. Basic Food Service Training

B. Center for the Vocationally Challenged - Business PC and Computer Programming Training

C. High-Tech Center

D. Project WorkAbility

# ORGANIZATION OF THIS DOCUMENT

Part II, developed by Brandeis University and organized by the Evaluation and Training Institute, presents an overview of the program, including its history, applicability, and main features. Part III presents a study and evaluation guide into the effectiveness, usefulness and impact of the Career Beginnings program.

# Part II: Overview of the Program

## Historical Background

The Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives (CCEI) in the Florence Heller Graduate School for Advanced Studies in Social Welfare at Brandeis University houses the national office for the Career Beginnings program. CCEI developed this program to help young disadvantaged students reach their potential by continuing their education beyond high school. In 1985, a national competition of 100 universities and colleges competed to pilot a model Career Beginnings program. Of the 100 applications submitted, 24 institutions were selected to set up the program. Rancho Santiago College in Santa Ana was chosen as one of the colleges.

The program was originally sponsored by the Commonwealth Fund, John D. and Catharine T. MacArthur Foundation and the Gannett Foundation, Inc. Since that time, additional funding has been received from many foundations and major corporations, such as Aetna Life and Casualty, The Melville Corporation, RJR Nabisco, Thom McAn, and Pillsbury. Public and private investment has been estimated at more than $12 million since 1986.

At Rancho Santiago college, funds came from the Gannett Foundation and the Commonwealth Fund. The community college district matched these funds every year; the program is now completely supported locally and receives no corporate funding. Each Spring, 100 students are recruited from six high schools in the Santa Ana and Garden Grove Unified School Districts to participate in the program.

## Purpose of the Program

Career Beginnings is aimed at helping minority or other disadvantaged students obtain postsecondary education and/or entry level employment with career growth potential. American industries now face a shortage of labor, given the current crisis in secondary school education, especially with the education of minorities. By educating these economically and socially disadvantaged students, motivating them toward success, and helping them formulate goals for their lives, they are able to lead productive and successful lives in the mainstream of America. A program like Career Beginnings has the potential to greatly influence the nation's economic well-being in the future.

Career Beginnings gives each student the chance to decide the paths of his or her life by opening up opportunities that would be otherwise unavailable. Many students are the first in their families to attend college, thus entering a new and alien world with no existing support network to help them. Through counseling, guidance, mentoring, and work experience, the participants of Career Beginnings have a high likelihood of succeeding in their chosen careers or fields of study. Career Beginnings joins high schools, the local business communities, and colleges together in a collaborative effort to overcome economic and social barriers and expose these students to the world of opportunity that awaits them.

The program benefits the local business community by enlarging the qualified work force. Without the program, many students would not continue their education and would be underprepared to enter the work force. It is in the business community's own self-interest to help students prepare for the world of work and realize their full potential. Businesses seeking to strengthen ties with local colleges find that the direct involvement Career Beginnings offers is a good tool.

The local community as a whole benefits by providing a rare opportunity for executives from business and the professions, secondary and higher education, and government and the public sector to combine their talents and to work together to the benefit of young people typically left out of the mainstream of society.

## Main Features of the Program

The collaborative community effort is the core of the Career Beginnings program. High schools recruit average- or under-achieving students who show promise. Local firms and major corporations provide summer employment experiences that serve the dual purpose of providing much needed income and valuable professional training. The business community is also the source of mentors for the students, a key component of the program's effectiveness. The colleges give academic support and direction, while providing valuable personal services such as counseling, workshops, and group activities. Career Beginnings is committed to the development of each student as a whole and achieves this aim through a comprehensive program that fits each individual student's academic, professional, and personal growth needs.

Career Beginnings is the largest program of its kind in the nation. Since 1986, more than 12,000 students and mentors have been served. The students are matched with an adult mentor from the business or professional community who provides guidance and encouragement. The academic and personal support services which include classes, group activities, and career workshops, continue throughout the students junior and senior year of high school. The program also provides summer employment placement for the students. Once the students finish high school, the

support services continue throughout the first year of college, employment, or advanced vocational training.

## The Project Staff of Local Programs

The program is initiated at individual colleges with staff provided by each college. Competent and dedicated personnel are necessary for the success of the program as they oversee the implementation and administration of the program at their college. The national office provides overall advice and guidance to the colleges. Yet, the program operates best when it mirrors the aims of the institution and is considered an important element of the college itself. Career Beginnings is a labor intensive program that requires a firm commitment from the adopting institution, namely in the form of fund-raising. The project staff must monitor up to 100 students and mentors, as well as coordinate all activities. Although the national office provides funding assistance, the operating expenses are the responsibility of the individual college.

The Brandeis staff are dedicated to encouraging creativity and local initiative. Helping each project to be highly effective, they provide technical assistance, management advice, program ideas, public relations, and regional and national meetings. The national office also conducts research into the program so that the program can be made more effective at every level. Included in Part IV of this VERP is a reprint of the summary of third-party evaluations of Career Beginnings.

By implementing a Career Beginnings program, a college benefits by increasing its visibility in the community and also increasing its enrollment levels of students who are typically ignored. Since colleges work directly with local high schools, a relationship develops that is beneficial to both the schools and their students.

## Selection of the Participants

Career Beginnings targets at-risk high school students who, with some guidance and special attention, are likely to succeed in college or careers. Before graduation from high school, the students are exposed to college environment and campus staff. Early exposure helps these students find direction in their lives.

The students are selected using the following criteria:

1. Current enrollment as a high school junior, with projected eligibility for graduation by the end of the senior year. In some cities, high school sophomores are also served.

2. Regular school attendance, with no significant history of disciplinary problems in school or in the community.

3. Average academic achievement, that is, falling in the middle 60% of their class.

4. Demonstration of personal motivation and commitment beyond typical school activities, such as participation in some form of community-based service or working part-time to contribute to the family income.

5. At least 50% must meet the federal definition of poverty.

6. At least 80% must be first-generation college students, that is, come from families in which neither parent has more than a high school diploma.

These entrance criteria insure that the students selected are at-risk and face barriers to the completion of secondary, or postsecondary, education.

The individual college's project staff rely on high school teachers and counselors to make the initial identification of qualified students. After an initial screening to insure that both the student's and the program's aims are compatible, these students begin the application process. This includes a formal application, an autobiographical statement, and letters of recommendations from ministers and teachers. The project staff then conducts personal interviews to make the final selection. Depending on the individual program, 50 to 100 students are chosen to participate in each Career Beginnings program.

## The Mentoring Component

Every component of Career Beginnings is integral to the program as a whole. Career Beginnings mentors serve a very specific purpose: to open the doors of opportunity for the students and to inform them of any information or skills that may be necessary to succeed. There are no casual encounters in Career Beginnings mentoring. It is highly structured, so that each student gets the most out of the experience. By the end of the student's senior year of high school, the mentor will have helped him or her formulate a definite career path and identify ways to achieve his or her goals.

Once the student is chosen for the Career Beginnings program, he or she is assigned to a mentor. From this moment on, the mentor and the student form a team to help overcome any barriers to the student's progress or education. A special relationship develops that provides the student with the guidance and assurance that allows that student to succeed. Mentors have the overwhelming ability to change the student's

life in an irreversible and positive way. Mentors give the students personal contact and provide a positive influence that often improves a student's grades and curbs their temptation to use drugs or get into trouble. Students are given a sense of responsibility that teaches them to deal with adversity or obstacles they may face in their lives. Above all, the student is given self-confidence and other tools necessary so that they are able to find direction in life and follow their dreams.

Each student and mentor meet once a month at minimum; interim contact by letter or phone is encouraged. Although this is only a guideline, many students and mentors meet more than once a month. The mentor is a positive influence in the student's life and more personal contact generally means more progress. As graduation draws nearer, particular attention is focused on future career and/or employment plans.

Students visit their mentors at their place of employment in order to learn more about the mentor's particular profession. Luncheons and business meetings with the mentor also expose the students to the professional world. By becoming involved with working men and women, the students actually become involved in the business world, easing the transition into it and make it more easily attainable.

Mentors for the program are successful working professionals who are willing to dedicate their valuable time so that these disadvantaged students can lead productive lives. A few are retired, but most are working as doctors, bankers, senior administrators, executives, professors, and small business people. Career Beginnings does not want the relationship to decline to the level of mere "buddies"; on the contrary, mentors must feel a sense of social responsibility and be willing to commit adequate time to the relationship. The relationship serves to enrich both the student's and the mentor's lives through the positive and purposeful contact between the two.

Career Beginnings conducts a careful screening process of prospective mentors that insures that only the best-suited and dedicated individuals are chosen to undertake this important responsibility. An orientation program introduces the new mentors to the Career Beginnings program and to the mentoring guidelines. Based on the mentor's interests and skills, he or she is matched with an individual student. Mentors are given material describing how to promote the program's aims and what the mentor needs to do in order to have the most productive relationship possible. Responsibilities include communication with high school youth, dealing with the social problems they may face, and how to help out with practical matters such as college or employment applications, financial aid statements, and resume building. Training continues throughout the length of the mentoring relationship, with ongoing support and workshops conducted by the project staff.

Progress of each relationship is monitored monthly by the project staff through phone calls to both mentors and students. Advice is given to both students and mentors to insure that the relationship is productive and successful.

## Personal Attention

The progress of each student is closely monitored in the program. Any pitfalls are immediately identified and corrected through counseling or other necessary means. The project staff divides the students into groups of about 15. Depending on the individual program, the advisors and counselors for each group come from either the high school or the college. Meetings and group sessions take place at both the high school and the college. This individualized attention allows for the personal growth of students into adults, by giving them a sense of purpose and responsibility. By closely monitoring the development of each student, the students realize that someone does care for them and expects them to be successful. This personal support helps the students achieve their goals.

## Summer Employment

Students are placed in meaningful jobs during their summer breaks. This valuable work experience serves the dual purpose of allowing students to earn money and giving them the opportunity to gain real world experience. A variety of positions are filled by Career Beginnings participants; many are of the type that build, or often start, a student's resume. The project staff work directly with local Private Industry Councils, corporations, small businesses and professional groups, thereby placing most students in a private business or a non-profit organization.

The jobs for students must be interesting and provide a challenge. One of the program's goals is to make sure that students have the information needed to make realistic and rational career judgements so they do not end up in dead-end jobs. The summer employment component helps students understand their options, and supports their efforts to develop a plan and make their own decisions. Typical jobs include engineer's assistant, copywriter, research assistant, office assistant in a law firm or government agency, physical therapy assistant, and tour guide. During the six week summer employment program, students are visited on the job by the project staff to monitor individual progress.

Each student is placed in a position that includes individualized attention by a supervisor. In this way, the supervisors can encourage extra productivity from each student and teach them valuable skills. Students are motivated to perform well above average because of the direct guidance and individual support each receives while on the job.

## Summer Enrichment Sessions and Activities

In addition to the summer jobs, students meet weekly as a group to attend enrichment classes. The classes are designed to promote the academic and personal success of each participant. Classes are given on a variety of issues that include career development, college planning, rules of the workplace, and personal improvement. Students are taught the valuable skills of communication, decision making, and time management and begin to develop a career awareness. They also receive review sessions and tutoring in areas such as mathematics, the language arts and the good study skills which are crucial to success in college. Many students receive high school or college credit for the time they spend in class.

Group activities are important to the personal growth of the students. They participate in picnics and other social events that allow for their communication and interpersonal skills growth. The students also find new friends who lend support to each other. Students also tour colleges in order to broaden their prospective educational and career pursuits. Cultural development is encouraged by trips to museums and theatre performances. These types of activities continue throughout the school year as well.

## School Year Activities

The most important part of the program comes during the Junior and Senior years of high school. Although the summer employment component of Career Beginnings is a valuable experience in itself, the program aims to graduate its underprivileged participants from high school. In addition to their regular high school classes, Career Beginnings participants undertake a rigorous schedule of workshops, activities, and classes at the college itself. The focus of the program changes monthly and aims to give the students specific objectives in areas of career development, postsecondary education, employability skills, academic preparation, and personal development. It is a direct extension of the activities undertaken in the summer months.

To promote personal development, students often undertake community service activities during the school year. Both the students and the communities benefit immensely from this. The community service projects, combined with the summer employment, helps students formulate future career plans, examine alternative postsecondary education opportunities, communicate with adults and peers more effectively, and set personal goals and make the critical decisions necessary to fulfill them.

Academic counseling and preparation is also a major part of the school year program. Students receive tutoring in weak areas. There are workshop series to help each student prepare for the ACT and SAT examinations. Writing classes are also offered

to prepare the students for writing compositions and essays in college. Classes are offered on how to complete applications for college as well as financial aid forms.

## Transition from High School

Career Beginnings students are frequently better prepared to continue with their postsecondary plans than college-bound students in general. They have finished an intensive two year program that not only has helped them formulate a comprehensive plan for their future, but has helped them to become adults. Although the program is less intensive once the student has graduated from high school, each student continues to receive support, guidance, and counseling that eases the transition to college or employment.

The summer before college, many students receive remedial tutoring to make sure they are at the academic level necessary for college study. Many students have to work during the summer in order to save enough money for tuition, room and board, and living expenses. Students who will continue with specific job training program often need employment as well. Career Beginnings helps these students find jobs.

For the students who have decided to begin a career after high school, the project staff help in the often stressful job search. They identify possible employment sources and help prepare the individual for the interview process. They also continue career and personal counseling.

Career Beginnings tracks the progress of students for at least 15 months after graduation. In this way, the ultimate aims of the program can be met, by insuring that no unforeseen obstacles after graduation prohibit the participant from attaining his or her own personal goals. This tracking process is also helpful in evaluating the strengths and weaknesses in the program itself.

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# Part IV: Career Beginnings Studies and Evaluations

The following section is a *Practitioner's Guide* to the Career Beginnings program produced by the Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives in December 1990. The guide focuses on studies and evaluations of the program since its inception. Three studies of the program have been undertaken and are thoroughly outlined and explained on the following pages. The three studies are:

- an Experimental Impact Study;
- a Process Study to evaluate program implementation; and
- a Survey of the Mentoring Aspect of the overall program.

This section covers all aspects of effectiveness, impact, and usefulness of the Career Beginnings program.

In order to maintain the comprehensive unity of the Practitioner's Guide itself, it is reprinted in its entirety with no omissions or deletions.

Also included is a copy of the Career Beginnings National Student Magazine, Beginning Now. The magazine focuses on individual students and their feelings about the program. It also gives an update on new developments at individual program sites across the nation.

# Career Beginnings Studies and Evaluations:

# A Practitioner's Guide

December 1990

Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives

Heller School - 60 Turner Street
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P.O. Box 9110
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**PREFACE**

We have prepared this guide not only for practitioners but also for others who are interested in learning more about the Career Beginnings program.

When we launched the Career Beginnings program in early 1986, we hoped to increase the number of high school juniors from low income families who complete high school and enter college, technical training or full-time employment. Some 12,000 students- and their 12,000 adult mentors- have now experienced Career Beginnings; and initial results suggest that the program works. A fifth cohort of students and mentors are now enrolled. Career Beginnings focuses on "tenacious" students - those with average grades who are underachieving but are not at high risk of dropping out - to help them realize their educational and career potential. The students come from generally disadvantaged backgrounds: most are minority students (65% black, 18% Hispanic, and 8% Asian); over 50% of them are from single parent families, most are officially poor.

Since 1986, Career Beginnings has operated in over 30 colleges in more than 25 cities, with some 100 students being served per college each year. In its first four years, over 90 percent of participating students have remained in the program and graduated from high school; over 60 percent go on to college (close to double the rate for similar students); and over 90 percent of these have completed their first year of college. Career Beginnings is now operating in 18 sites, with additional new sites being developed, including a statewide initiative in Mississippi.

Career Beginnings matches each student with a mentor from the local business community, to be part teacher, part coach, part advisor, and part friend. This is currently one of the biggest career-focused mentoring initiatives in operation nationally. Mentors are carefully selected, trained and supported; they in turn help their students with career planning, applying to college, and understanding the professional work environment.

In addition to the support and guidance from their mentor, students attend workshops on career planning; basic academic skills, such as reading, writing and mathematics; skills such as money management, time management, and family planning; college financial aid programs; employers' expectations, job behavior, and resume writing. Career Beginnings typically enrolls students for about 19 months, from the beginning of their junior year through graduation.

If you have further questions about Career Beginnings or the Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives, please contact us at 617-736-4990.

## INTRODUCTION

During the past few years, there have been three distinct independent research and evaluation studies of Career Beginnings and/or different aspects of the program:

- A social science "random assignment experiment" designed to assess program impact;
- A "process study" based on interviews with local project staff designed to assess program implementation; and
- A survey of roughly 400 Career Beginners and their mentors designed to clarify how mentoring worked and how it might be improved.

The first and third of these have been recently completed and the second will soon be available.

This paper has been prepared in order to provide a summary of the highlights of these three studies, along with contextual information on how the results of the studies should be understood and interpreted to participants in the program, the organizations that Career Beginnings staff work with, potential funders, and the public at large.

## REVIEWING THE THREE CAREER BEGINNINGS STUDIES

Those seeking to understand the implications of the experimental impact study, the process study, and the mentor study should understand what they are and what they are not. Each of the three studies provides a wealth of information for project operators, administrators, and researchers to review and synthesize. Having data early on in a new project, like Career Beginnings, can enhance local and national management capacity, improve our understanding about local participants, institutions, and community involvement, and increase the knowledge base for future project initiatives and research.

On the other hand, none of them are either comprehensive or up-to-date in terms of Career Beginnings as the program is run today. Each of them was designed to carry out a limited purpose; each thus only looks at a single aspect of Career Beginnings; and each focuses on a limited time in the past--at least two years ago.

An overview of the purpose, timing, and number of sites of each study is presented in Exhibit A on page three. A summary of which local projects were included in each study is presented in Exhibit B on page four.

**Two major factors need to be kept in mind in reviewing the results of these studies:**

- **First, as in most programs, Career Beginnings has matured considerably in the years since the formative period during which most of this research was conducted, and**

- **Second, performance varied considerably from site to site.**

**This latter point is particularly important. In the history of youth program research, too little attention has focused on site by site differences and, perhaps, too much attention has been concentrated on aggregate results from multi-site demonstration projects.** With this in mind, there are several reasons to believe that both the smoothness of program operations and quantitative data on outcomes would be different if these studies were repeated today:

- The social science literature shows that the first few years of program implementation are often somewhat uneven as new ideas go through their "shake down cruise" and staff learn the best (and the worst) ways to accomplish things.

- The Career Beginnings program model has been fine-tuned over time as National Program Office and local project staff have worked together to refine guidelines and standards.

- Most Career Beginnings local projects have learned from their experience and with the assistance of the National Program Office success fully taken steps to improve things, thereby increasing their capacity of the system to effectively implement the model. In fact, preliminary results of the research described in this paper have helped sites to redirect their efforts in this way.

- Some of the local projects with the most severe problems are no longer a part of the Career Beginnings network.

**Given this understanding, there is every reason to believe that the currently implemented Career Beginnings offerings are much stronger than those that were studied and that the measured impacts of the program would be greater today than during the study period. Furthermore, many of the shortcomings addressed in the process and mentoring studies have already been modified.**

The measured variations in performance from project to project remind us that patterns that hold for the program as a whole may not be appropriate descriptions of what is happening at your particular site at this time. Thus, when you review the entire report, it would be useful to review specific findings for your project and compare them with program-wide statistics, patterns, and experiences.

## Exhibit A

## OVERVIEW OF THE PURPOSE, TIMING, AND COVERAGE OF THE THREE STUDIES

| STUDY | PURPOSE | NUMBER OF SITES | PERIOD COVERED |
|---|---|---|---|
| Experimental Impact Study | To estimate the amount of difference that Career Beginnings makes in young participants' lives. | Seven | Second year of Career Beginnings implementation, 1987-88. |
| Process Study | To document how and why the local projects evolved as they did and to develop an understanding of the implications of these lessons for future program planing and/or operations | Nine | The first three program years: 1986-1989. |
| Mentor Study | To gain insight into the mentoring process | Sixteen | Second year of Career Beginnings implementation, 1987-88 |

Exhibit B

## SITES PARTICIPATING IN STUDIES OF CAREER BEGINNINGS

| Project | Impact Study | Process Study | Mentor Study |
|---|---|---|---|
| California State University (Bakersfield)* | | | X |
| Boston Area Colleges* | | | X |
| City University of New York (Graduate Center, Manhattan)* | | | X |
| Bronx Community College* | X | X | |
| University of Tennessee at Chattanooga* | | X | X |
| Case Western Reserve University (Cleveland)* | | X | X |
| Des Moines Area Community College (Iowa)* | | | X |
| Indiana University Northwest (Gary)* | X | X | X |
| Hartford Consortium (Connecticut)* | | | X |
| Butler University (Indianapolis) | X | X | X |
| Jacksonville University (Florida)* | X | X | X |
| Christian Brothers College (Memphis) | | | X |
| Miami-Dade Community College | | | X |
| Passaic County Community College (Paterson NJ) | | | X |
| University of Rochester | X | X | X |
| Rancho Santiago Community College (Santa Ana, CA)* | X | X | X |
| Youngstown State University (Ohio) | X | X | X |
| | 7 sites | 9 sites | 16 sites |

* Local project is currently a part of the National Career Beginnings Program network.

**EXPERIMENTAL IMPACT STUDY**

Rationale and Methods

The Commonwealth Fund contracted with Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation, one of the leading employment-related research organizations to do an "impact study" of Career Beginnings, i.e., an effort to distinguish the difference that Career Beginnings has made in the lives of participants.

Researchers often distinguish between the terms "outcomes" and "impacts" in the following way. The term "outcome" is usually used to mean the things that happen to young people after they participate in a program. For example, at a given site, 75% of the Career Beginners might graduate high school and go on to a two or four year college. However, some of them might have graduated high school and gone to college even without the Career Beginnings program, and it is therefore not accurate for the program to claim credit for all of these positive outcomes.

Given this situation, researchers try to estimate the proportion of young people who would have graduated and gone on to college anyhow, and then subtracting this figure from the measured outcome in order to come up with an estimate of "impact", the proportion of participants for whom the program made a difference.

To stick with our example, if 75% of the Career Beginners at a given site graduated high school and we believe that 50% of them would have done so even without the program, we (or MDRC) would estimate the impact at 25%. In other words, in this example, one in four program participants are better off than they would have been without the program.

The most widely accepted method of estimating what would have happened to people if they did not participate in a program is setting up what is called a "random assignment experiment". This involves using some form of randomness (like flipping a coin) to divide eligible participants into two groups: one who gets program services and one that does not. The laws of statistics assure us that the two groups will be very similar, and so the outcomes experienced by people in the comparison group are assumed to be very similar to those that would have occurred to the people in the experimental group had they not gotten program services. If this is true, a comparison of the results in the experimental and control groups would be the best indicator of the difference that participating in the program has made in people's lives.

Adopting this approach, MDRC worked with seven local Career Beginnings projects to implement a random assignment experiment at their sites and then conducted several surveys to find out what had happened to the experimental and control group members. Basically, how it worked was that each site recruited 200 students to fill 100

Career Beginnings slots. From this larger pool, MDRC conducted a random assignment and assigned students to the experimental (participant) and control (non-participant) groups. It is important to remember that those students assigned to the control group were equally motivated to participate in a program and may, in fact, have sought out other programs or individuals to help themselves.

**Major Findings**

Overall Program Impact

**The MDRC study shows that Career Beginnings does make a difference in the lives of many young people.** The following excerpt from the executive summary of the MDRC report presents one of the fundamental findings:

> **Career Beginnings led to an increase in college attendance and, more generally, to raised educational aspirations among experimentals.** The proportion of experimentals ever attending college during the follow-up year was 53.2%, an increase of 4.7 percentage points (or 9.7%) over the control group rate of 48.5%. This result is statistically significant.

Analyses presented in the body of the report point out that these estimates about program impact are "conservative" since they are based on comparisons of an experimental group in which about 20% of the young people never received a Career Beginnings service, and a control group in which about 10% of the young people did receive one or more services from the program.[1]

The authors of the MDRC report therefore conclude that it is appropriate to raise the estimate of overall program impact from 4.7 percentage points (or 9.7%) to at least 5.9 percentage points (or 12.2%) and perhaps as high as 6.9 percentage points (or 14.2%) in order to compensate for this problem.

Secondly, the report contains statistical site-by-site breakdowns which show that the measured impact in the two projects that the National Program Office feels had the soundest programs to be more than 10 percentage points. This means that the latter Career

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[1] Those who conduct random assignment experiments compare the results for those who were assigned to the experimental (program) group with those for a control group that did not receive program services (although they may have been helped by other programs.) In fact, as noted above, about one in five of the young people who were randomly assigned to the "Career Beginnings experimental group" never showed up for services. Assuming that these "no-shows" were less successful than Career Beginnings participants, this technique of analysis--which is the standard one in the social science field--would underestimate the true difference between the Career Beginners and members of the control group. Similarly, since about one in ten people who were assigned to not participate did show up and receive services, the program was helpful to this group as well. This would also tend to underestimate the true impact of the program, i.e., the difference between what happened to those who participated versus what happened to the non-participants.



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Beginnings sites did between 20% to 30% better than their counterparts. The data also show that there were very small negative impacts in the two projects with the most implementation problems. In other words, **the MDRC research shows that projects that implemented the program well had substantial impacts on the lives of participants.**

Finally, the conduct of the research itself may have affected program operations at each of the projects, and may have made the projects less effective than they would otherwise have been. For example, projects participating in the impact experimental study were required to recruit twice as many young people as they would otherwise have done, and in many instances, this led them to change their recruitment practices and/or divert resources from other program services in order to insure that at least 200 qualified young people were enrolled. However, even with these caveats, the overall program impact results are very good news.

Other Findings about Impact

The following excepts from the MDRC executive summary provide additional information about the major study findings:

> **Experimental-control differences in college enrollment rates persisted throughout the post-high school year....**Experimentals were not only more likely than controls to go to college at some point during the follow-up period, but they were also more likely to begin college "on schedule" in the fall semester rather than later one. The experimental-control differential in college attendance was about 6 percentage points in September, October, and November, but began to narrow thereafter.
>
> **There was a good deal of site variation in the program's impact on college attendance.** At the two sites judged to have implemented Career Beginnings most effectively, based on the views of Brandeis University staff and on the quantitative experimental-control difference in service receipt identified by MDRC, the experimental-control differential in college attendance exceed 10 percentage points. In contrast, at the two sites that were judged to have been least successful, impacts were negative (that is, controls attended college more than experimentals).
>
> **As expected, experimentals worked less and earned less than controls during the follow-up year. Their foregone earnings may be seen as an investment in their futures.** An immediate short-term trade-off between attending college and working was anticipated and, in fact, occurred.

Other Findings

(a) Participant Assessments of Career Beginnings

In addition to the statistical analysis of program impact, the MDRC study also included a survey of Career Beginner assessments of the program. The MDRC report shows that:

**More than 90% of the Career Beginners felt that the program that they had participated in had been helpful to them in moving toward their educational and employment goals.**

This group was divided fairly equally among those who felt the program was very helpful (45.9% of the total) and those who thought it was somewhat helpful (44.3%).

(b) Receipt of Services by the Control Group

One of the most surprising findings of the MDRC study is the fact that the control group members (who were not in Career Beginnings) received far more services than had been anticipated. As a result, while Career Beginnings tend to have more education-related services, job-related services, mentoring, counselling, and other services than the members of the control group, the gap was sometimes as small or a four or five percent difference.

This is a puzzling finding. However, some insight into the explanation can be obtained from the fact that services to Career Beginners far exceeded those to controls at some of the best implemented sites, and there is no difference (or even a negative difference) at some of the sites with the biggest implementation problems, showing that perhaps the weakest sites helped some controls, or that an array of alternative services were available to controls in the schools or the community.

In any event, findings such as these should lead local Career Beginnings project staff to review the participant selection process and offerings in the light of what appears to be a wide range of services that are available to high school students who seek them out.

**Conclusions and Relevance to Local Career Beginnings Projects**

The "random assignment experiment" is generally considered to be the most scientific endeavor to figure out what difference social programs are making, and Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation is one of the best known and respected research firms that conducts this kind of study. The study shows program impact of

approximately five percent, a significant result in studies of this type. Moreover, as noted above, the true impact of the program as a whole and the best implemented projects within the program are greater than the average statistics of strong and weak project sites reported by MDRC for that time period.

Another key variable is the lifetime financial benefits of Career Beginnings to those who complete the program and attend college. An analysis of the economic value of the college attendance impacts of Career Beginnings was requested by MDRC as they prepared their final report. They report "that college graduation has a large payoff in terms of future earnings: For example, it has been estimated that, by age 40, black college graduates have earned at least $150,000 more than blacks without a college degree. Because the potential earnings are so great and the program cost relatively low, Career Beginnings could be a worthwhile investment even if the five-point difference narrows over the years between initial college attendance and actual college graduation." What this means from a cost-benefit perspective, is that Career Beginnings is a good financial investment for all concerned.

The completion of the MDRC impact study means that local projects can tell potential funders and others in the community that:

> **The national Career Beginnings program has been subjected to the most rigorous of evaluations and has been shown to have impacts as great as--if not greater--than comparable education and training programs.**

As was noted by the President of MDRC in a preface to the report:

> **This study of the impacts of Career Beginnings indicates that the program succeeded in increasing college attendance in the year immediately following high school graduation...**
>
> **Because the potential earnings gains [for college graduates] are so great and the program cost relatively low, Career Beginnings could be a worthwhile investment even if the five-point difference [in measured impact] narrows over the years between initial college attendance and actual college graduation.**
>
> **Career Beginnings appears to offer a coherent framework for delivering services to disadvantaged youths. It also seems a promising route for enhancing their post-secondary educational attainment and life opportunities.**

MDRC researchers also raised another important area that readers should consider:

> **Career Beginnings should not be viewed merely as an aggregation of separate services.** In the view of personnel in both the national Career Beginnings office and local sites, the program's purpose was not simply to offer services, but to weave through these services a set of messages and themes aimed at enhancing participants' feelings of self-worth and their ability to plan for the future.

Thus the results of the MDRC impact study can and should be used to provide definitive statistical evidence of the fact that Career Beginnings is making differences in the lives of the young, tenacious program participants.

## PROCESS STUDY

### Rationale and Methods

In general, social programs are never implemented exactly as planned. And while all local Career Beginnings project sites share a set of common goals and standards, no two projects are exactly alike. Given these facts, what can one learn from the variations in planning and operational activities that have occurred across the projects during their first three years?

In order to answer questions like this, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation provided funding for an independent "process study" of the Career Beginnings program. This study was conducted by Education Matters!, a small educational research organization in Cambridge, Massachusetts using a staff of experienced program evaluators.

### Major Findings

The basic finding of the study is presented in slightly different terms at several points in the report. **The process study research team reports that the ideas underlying the Career Beginnings approach are sound. When the program--and all of its components--are well implemented, it can be a powerful force for change in the lives of tenacious youth.** As noted in the report:

> The concept of providing a package of career- and college-oriented services to the "middle group" of disadvantaged young people makes sense both in the abstract and in the light of the fact that young people in this group rarely get adequate attention from school guidance counselors and existing programs for disadvantaged youth.

With the possible exception of mentoring, none of the individual components in the program model is novel. However, each of the components represents a sensible approach to meet an important need faced by disadvantaged high school youth, and the coordinated delivery of all of them offers three important advantages: (a) synergy, the likelihood that benefits from one component can spill over and increase the effectiveness of others; (b) tailoring, an ability to provide services that meet the varying needs of different types of young people, e.g., those whose greatest need is academic help, those whose greatest need is adult guidance; and (c) a "fail-safe" mechanism that means that even if one component is poorly implemented, there is a possibility that other components may offer services that can get through to the participants and make a difference in their lives.

Other findings that are highlighted in the report include the following:

- **It is impossible to identify any specific components of the Career Beginnings model as being central to the achievement of program goals. Different components seem to be most critical for different participants.**

- **Most projects have not implemented the program in a way that allows it to achieve its full potential... However, preliminary evidence suggests that those sites that have implemented the model best are attaining the best results.**

  -- There is reason to be concerned that the programs at some sites lack the overall <u>intensity</u> required to have a major impact on the lives of most participants.

  -- The sites have also varied in their ability to plan and deliver quality services that are relevant to the needs of young people. In particular, in many sites, local project management has not had either the capacity or resources to move beyond mechanical efforts to implement each of the individual components.

  -- The sites that developed the strongest programs have tended to have several features in common: (a) local project managers who were experienced in youth programming, who had senior status in their universities and project management experience, who had a "vision" of what they were hoping to accomplish that was at least partially formed before they received the Career Beginnings grant announcement, and (b) clear support from their institutions and previous working relationships with those who were expected to collaborate as program partners.

- **Implementing Career Beginnings has proven to be more time- and resource-consuming than local staff had anticipated at the outset.**[2] Thus, at the local level, even the best sites often seemed strapped for more staff time to devote to implementing each of the project components, and local Career Beginnings staff invariably put in many more hours than they are paid for.

- **Efforts to expand the program and upgrade continuing sites should focus on insuring that local project managers have the capacity and the resources to develop forward-looking plans, provide quality services, assess them, and devote scarce resources towards the highest priorities.**

**Conclusions and Relevance to Local Career Beginnings Projects**

Many of the findings of the Education Matters process study were known to National Program Office staff and are undoubtedly unsurprising to local projects as well. These results are still significant in that they represent a validation of beliefs that we have about the program on the part of an independent third party evaluator.

Perhaps most significantly, however, the process study supports the conclusion that:

> **The Career Beginnings projects that do the best job of implementing the total program model were the most likely to demonstrate sizeable impacts on the lives of the high school juniors and seniors that participate.**

**MENTOR SURVEY**

Rationale and Methods

The mentoring component of Career Beginnings is attracting widespread nationwide attention as are literally dozens of other efforts to match up mentors and a variety of different types of youth and adults who are in need of guidance, assistance, or inspiration. In response to this growing nationwide interest and attention, the Commonwealth Fund provided funding to Louis Harris and Associates. Inc. a nationally known polling firm, to interview

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[2] As noted in the report, "The time and resource demands involved in running the program--recruiting 100 participants per year; arranging for 100 quality summer jobs; recruiting, training, and overseeing 100 mentors; providing counseling/case management for 100 participants; arranging for and providing an array of summer and school year group activities; as well as nurturing partnerships and promoting institutionalization of the program--have all exceeded expectations, and thus presented a management challenge that some sites has been better able to meet than others. As time passed, it became evident that even apparently simple-seeming components such as providing academic enrichment or finding employers for summer jobs needed considerable attention to insure that they were well-implemented."

roughly 400 Career Beginnings mentors and their students in order to provide insights into the operation and impact of mentoring.

As noted in Exhibit A, sixteen Career Beginnings projects provided the names of mentors and Career Beginners to be interviewed. A total of 401 Career Beginners and 401 mentors were interviewed on the telephone between July and November 1989 and asked about their experiences with mentoring and their judgements about how effective it was.

**Major Findings**

Career Beginners

The highlights of the results of the survey of the Career Beginners include the following:

- **The vast majority of Career Beginners credit their mentors with helping improve their lives.**

  -- Roughly three of every four Career Beginners say that their mentors helped them to try harder, raise goals and expectations, and/or increase self-confidence.

  -- Roughly six of every ten Career Beginners say that their mentors helped them to improve their grades in school.

  -- More than half of the Career Beginners said that their mentors have improved their ability to stay away from drugs and keep out of trouble.

  -- Almost half of the Career Beginners said that their mentors helped them to have more respect for, to better understand, or to be more comfortable with people from other races or ethnic groups.

  -- Almost half of the Career Beginners said that their mentors helped them to improve their relationships with teachers and family members.

Somewhat surprisingly, only one in four Career Beginners said that their mentor was vitally important in helping them make career choices.

Mentors

The highlights of the survey of Career Beginnings mentors include the following:

- **Career Beginnings mentors reported that their activities had improved their own lives in several important ways as well as being helpful to the program participants.**

-- More than nine of every ten Career Beginnings mentors said that they enjoyed their role.

-- About seven of every eight Career Beginnings mentors were willing to serve as mentors again in the future.

-- Roughly half of the Career Beginnings mentors said that the time that they put in helped them to fulfill their other responsibilities while fewer than one in ten said it detracted from these responsibilities.

-- Almost half of the Career Beginnings mentors who worked with a student of a different racial background said that the experience had increased their respect for, understanding of, or comfort with people of other races and ethnic groups.

-- Many mentors said that their experience with Career Beginners helped their relationships with their own children or other family members.

The survey also provided insights into the characteristics of the mentors and how they were recruited. It indicated that the mentors were:

- Well educated (89% college graduates, including 57% with postgraduate degrees);
- Professionals or managers (81%);
- Ethnically diverse (half are minorities);
- Well paid (roughly half with salaries over $ 50,000 per year).

Nine of every ten mentors had already served in a similar role in the past, either informally (69%) or in a formal program (21%).

Career Beginnings staff were the primary recruitment source for the mentors (39%). Other sources of recruitment were colleagues at work (20%), other mentors (11%), and community organizations (9%).

Lessons for Running a Career Beginnings Program

The conclusions that the Commonwealth Fund drew from its study included that it was valuable to prepare students for the mentoring experience, and that students did better when they met with their mentors more frequently. This implies that Career Beginnings projects should continue to emphasize efforts to train students on the potential benefits of the mentoring experience and how to get along with a mentor, as well as to encourage frequent mentor-student interaction.

On the other hand, somewhat surprisingly, the study found that mentors who had completed training programs did not appear to have a greater influence on students than those who did not have this type of training. However, this may be more a reflection of the specific types of training that the mentors received rather than a generalizable finding.

Finally, the study did not provide any guidance on the best methods to match mentors and students. There was, for example, no relationship between perceived success of the mentoring experience and either (a) whether or not the mentor was assigned or chosen, and (b) whether or not mentor and student were of the same ethnic background.

**Conclusions and Relevance to Local Career Beginnings Projects**

The Louis Harris surveys present the beliefs of Career Beginners and the adults who mentored them about the effectiveness of the process. They do not prove anything, but the nationwide sample surveys do represent powerful evidence to support the conclusions that:

> **Both Career Beginners and their mentors almost invariably felt that the mentoring experience was beneficial to them.**
>
> **Career Beginners are more likely to get something out of the mentoring experience when they are well prepared and when they meet frequently with the men and women who serve as their mentors.**

The results are noteworthy in that they come from sixteen different sites across the country and their credibility is enhanced by the fact that the surveys were done by the Louis Harris organization. These results should be useful in promoting Career Beginnings among fund-raisers and other community leaders, as well as strengthening partnerships with the business groups and business leaders that are the source of local mentors.

Several other potential uses of the study results also come to mind. They include being used as resource materials for:

- Meetings held to recruit, screen, and/or train potential mentors;
- Group sessions in which current mentors share their experiences and look for guidance;
- More frequent contact with mentors within the initial weeks of student involvement in order to reduce problems and increase the chances for success.

## OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

Taken together, the three studies lead to one broad conclusion: **when well-implemented, Career Beginnings projects can have a major positive impact on the lives of tenacious teenagers. Career Beginners at projects with concerted, coherent, packages of services are more likely to go to college or otherwise achieve their post-high school goals than similar non-participants at their sites.**

Others who have reviewed these three studies have come to conclusions that are similar to our own. For example, a nationally known evaluator who reviewed all three studies summarized his thoughts in the following way:

> Good implementation makes a difference with a good model like Career Beginnings. Those sites with a coherent pattern of activity--not just a collection of individual components--show surprising impact.

Another nationally known leader in the youth employment and training field reviewed the results and wrote that:

> As a social policy analyst before and since, I have assessed most, if not all, youth interventions of the last twenty-five years. Based on a very careful review of the program information and research results, I conclude that the Career Beginnings Program was among the more effectively designed and implemented youth demonstration programs, focusing on a much-needed intervention approach.

All in all, the research conveys several important messages:

- **The Career Beginnings model makes sense and has been proven effective;**
- **Reviewing program goals about who is served, when service begins, and how long students participate would be worthwhile; and**
- **Improving implementation improves outcomes.**

The first of them is an important message to spread throughout our communities--those who fund us, those who serve as program partners, and the young people who participate. In the midst of ongoing efforts to find the right way to improve the effectiveness of educational programs for disadvantaged youth, Career Beginnings has demonstrated that when tenacious, under-achieving, young people are given the opportunity to participate in a well-structured, well-implemented program, they <u>will</u> achieve.

The remaining messages are equally important for the Career Beginnings National Program Office and local projects. We can't rest on our laurels. We have to continue working to make a very good program even better.

The Career Beginnings National Student Magazine

# Beginnings

## Summer Accomplishments

zine Fall 1990

# ng NOW

## Future Challenges

# Summer Accomplishments

Chicago Career Beginner Antionette Fox demonstrates how to make bubbles at her job in the Expressways Children's Museum. (Photo by Caroline O Boyle)

## An Enjoyable Summer

Gina Williams
Bronx Community College
Career Beginnings Project
Bronx, New York

In my first Career Beginnings meeting, I saw that I was a part of something which could help me to accelerate my learning and give me an idea of what a college campus and college professors are like. As I sat and listened, I realized they expected us not to be adolescents, but to be adults, and being adults means taking on a lot of responsibility. I enjoy the work experience and I love school; the two together have helped me have an enjoyable summer.

## Interning at Provident Life Insurance

Carla Fairchild
University of Tennessee
Career Beginnings Project
Chattanooga, Tennessee

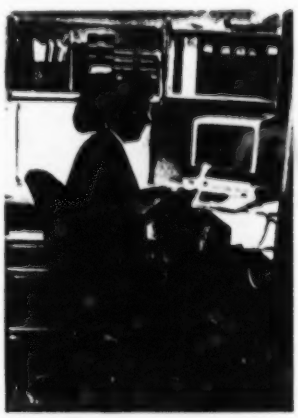
This summer I had an internship at Provident Life Insurance in the Group Dental Field. At first I didn't think that I would be as readily accepted as I was. But the workers were really psyched up about us being around. All of the clerks in the unit were helpful with our questions. They said they would really regret when they see us leave.

Thanks to Career Beginnings, I have gained work experience in an office environment that I probably couldn't have gotten on my own. I now have an understanding of the business field; especially dental insurance. I will be able to use this experience when I am ready to make my career choice one day.

## Help Reaching My Dream

Venus Harrison
Tacoma Community College
Career Beginnings Project
Tacoma, Washington

I'm a senior who has had plans for attending a four-year college. Just recently I've realized that these so-called plans were only a dream I've had my entire life. Then, in the summer before my senior year, I had my first experience with Career Beginnings. Now I'm learning a lot about actually preparing for college. If I had entered the program any later, my dream may not have reached its full potential.



University of Tennessee Career Beginner Kimberly Pickett at work during her internship at Provident Life Insurance.

## Feeling Good in a CB Workshop

Sylvia Heredia
California State University, Bakersfield
Career Beginnings Project
Bakersfield, California

My favorite workshop was the one we had on self-esteem. This workshop was very helpful for me because it made me and others feel good about each other. [illegible] the workshop made me realize how putting people down affects them. The most important thing I learned that day was the idea that "failure is an event, not a person."

Bakersfield Career Beginners Paul Shaw and Jason Lai delivering mail on campus.

## Helping a Company Run Smoothly

Ron Rogers
University of Minnesota
Career Beginnings Project
Minneapolis, Minnesota

My eight-week summer work experience at the Pillsbury Company gave me an opportunity to see how a company is run on a daily basis. I learned how to use the Lotus computer program, visited the company plant and participated in many laboratory experiments. My experiences helped me to appreciate how my work efforts and the efforts of many other people help to make a company run smoothly. I know that the rewarding experience I've gained will help me in the future.

## Teaching and Learning at a Children's Museum

Dorletha Porch
Columbia College
Career Beginnings Project
Chicago, Illinois

This summer, I worked at Expressway's Children Museum and my job was wonderful. The thing I liked most was helping the kids out and knowing that they were learning from me. It made me feel good inside. I remember one time when I was working in the Quilt department helping a little boy to make a snowflake. I explained it to him step by step. When I was done, he started to talk and he was speaking in another language. I felt so embarrassed but then I saw that he still understood me. I was glad that he still learned even though he didn't speak my language. Then I felt even better when he showed his little sister how to make the snowflake. I was amazed.

## Things Never Dreamed Of

Pernell E. Brown III
Jacksonville University
Career Beginnings Project
Jacksonville, Florida

My experience on the Outward Bound trip this summer was exciting. I got to do things I would never have dreamed of. I climbed mountains, climbed rocks with ropes, walked tight ropes, swam in ponds, and hiked with backpacks. It was a challenge and I had a good time. I thank Career Beginnings for allowing me the chance to have this experience.

## Clues to the Working World

Takiyah T. Driver
Indiana University, Northwest
Career Beginnings Project
Gary, Indiana

My favorite Career Beginnings workshop was the one on interviewing and resumes. Before, I really had no idea how to write a resume. The workshop gave me clues to what the real working world will be like. I never realized just how important interviewing is in getting a job. This was a very enlightening experience for me. Career Beginnings has helped me in ways no one else could.

Indiana University, N.W. Career Beginner Khrishana Lucker shelving books at her job in the library.



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# Future Challenges

## Looking Forward to Being a Senior

Anir Gonzalez
Hartford Consortium of Colleges Career Beginnings Project
Hartford, Connecticut

This is my last year in high school; I'm a senior at last. I'm looking forward to all the activities of this coming year; senior prom, picnic, but–especially–graduation day. Right now I'm also looking at things I need to conquer to reach my goals. I came from Puerto Rico 3 years ago and I have been trying to take the courses necessary to be accepted to college. This is going to be one of the hardest steps toward my goal but I will achieve it. I'm not saying that it will be easy but I believe in myself and I believe I can and will do it!

## Concentrating on Better Grades

Elizabeth Martinez
California State University, Bakersfield
Career Beginnings Project
Bakersfield, California

The biggest challenge I face this fall is getting better grades. I used to get good grades in Junior High. Then I went through problems and started rebelling. Needless to say, my grades went down. Now I realize I have to concentrate on my grades. It is hard to concentrate, but I will do it. I want to make my parents proud of me. I will sacrifice going out with my friends to study and work hard.

Tacoma Community College Career Beginner Jamal Coney relaxing after a summer workshop.

Chicago Career Beginner Latina Valentin passes time at work, but not in the way you might think. (Photo by Carolina T. Lovie)

## Keeping My Mind On School

Carlos Emmons
Mississippi Valley State University Career Beginnings Project
Itta Bena, Mississippi

The biggest challenge I will face at school this year is trying to keep my mind on my work and not on the things that are going on around me. It's my senior year and it's going to be very hard to keep my mind focused on school. I will have to work very hard to maintain acceptable grades and to act in an orderly manner.

## The "Dreaded" SAT

Tanesha Bland
Tarleton University, Northwest [illegible] Project

[illegible] challenge I'm going to face in my last year of school is the "dreaded" SAT. Literally, when someone even whispers the "S" word, the hair on the back of my neck stands up. The problem isn't the test itself, but what the test stands for. The SAT spells my future. I guess the "S" word would frighten anyone who wants a successful future. But this is my future we're talking about and this is what I'm going to do; I'm going to do the best I can, for my future, on the dreaded SAT!



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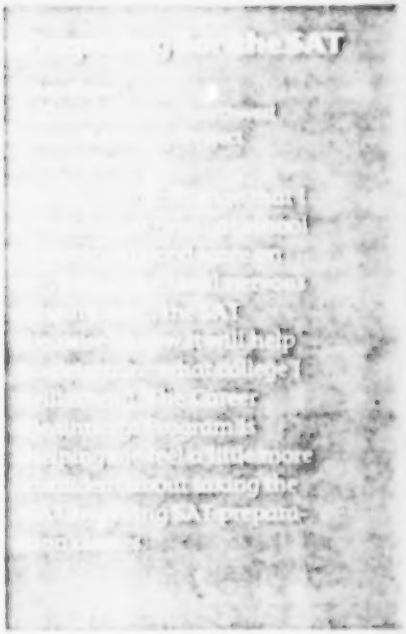
## Balancing My Time

Tara M. Smith
Indiana University Northwest
Career Beginnings Project
Gary, Indiana

My biggest challenge at Horace Mann High is being able to balance my time between my academic and social life. I was simply drifting through my high school career, wasting my intelligence and talent. My grades were good last year, but they weren't the best.

By participating in the Career Beginnings Program, I was able to clarify my goals and fine tune my talents. This program has redefined my life and motivated me to face the challenge of succeeding in school this year. For this, I will forever be grateful to the Career Beginnings Program and Indiana University, Northwest.



## My Future Is Up To Me

Sochent Ith
Rancho Santiago College Career Beginnings Project
Santa Ana, California

In our last Work Experience class, we had a guest speaker who talked about all sorts of things dealing with our future and how to get started in the right direction. One of the topics was about setting our goals and ways to make them happen. The things he said were so true that I could picture them happening to me. So, starting today I'm going to set some goals and stick with them. His talk was very convincing and it helped me realize that my future is up to me. Thanks to Career Beginnings I think I'm going in the right direction.



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# News Around the Nation

At the University of South ern Mississippi (left to right) Career Counselor Paullete Drake, Career Beginners Paul Flemming and Stevie B. Smith, and a college student participate in an on campus orientation.

**Hartford, CT**

Special thanks to CB alum **Baylon Williams**. Baylon completed high school last spring and got a summer job in the Data Operations Department at Cigna Insurance. Still, he found time after work to assist at the orientation meetings for new Career Beginners and to share his experiences on building a strong mentor/student relationship at the Mentor Preparation Workshop. New CBers and mentors had a chance to use Baylon's advice at a Mentor-Student Fun Day held in August.

**New York, NY**

Congratulations to Bronx Career Beginners **Dara Belton** and **Daniel McFarland** who were admitted to Hi-REAP, a program for high school students interested in medicine or science. The students will participate in research work in hospital labs. Praise is also due **Kiwana Atkins**, who achieved the top score on a SAT preparation test. Although Bronx CBers all worked hard to prepare for their SATs this summer, they also took time off to go to a Yankees game and have a pool party.

Eight City University of New York Career Beginners pounded the pavement in a 30 kilometer walkathon to raise money for the Greater New York March of Dimes, an organization that serves disabled children. The Career Beginners asked mentors, family members, and friends to donate money for each kilometer they walked. At the end of the walkathon, the CBers had raised over $300 for the March of Dimes.

**Jacksonville, FL**

Congratulations to **Clarence Cobb** and **Jettie Collier**, chosen Mr. and Ms. Career Beginnings at a pageant held in July. Winners were chosen based on talent, formal attire, and personal statements on being successful and achieving their goals. In August, CBers and their parents attended a formal Awards Banquet on campus at Jacksonville University. Each student received a certificate in recognition of accomplishments and contributions to the program during the summer.

**Itta Bena, MS**

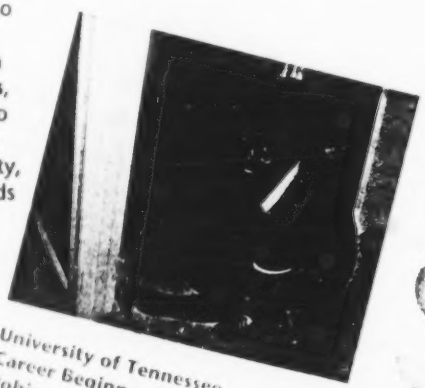
CBers from Holmes and Leflore Counties got to know one another at a Community Building Day held at Mississippi Valley State University. Star performers at the pool-side talent show were **Anthony Hodge**, who displayed the latest dance steps and **Georgia Martin**, who modeled fashions. Congratulations also to **Maurice Moore**, who was asked to stay on at his summer job. Maurice, who plans to go into law, will continue working for Attorney Willie Perkins after school this fall.

**Long Beach, MS**

In July, Career Beginners spent a day at the main campus of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg. CBers attended an orientation during which university officials described the requirements for attending college, the admissions process, and how to obtain financial aid. Led by university students, CBers then toured dorms, classes, and recreational facilities before having lunch in the student cafeteria.

**Chattanooga, TN**

**LaShanna Howard**, **Lisa Pinkard**, **Carla Fairchild**, **Kimberly Pickett**, **JaVonda Young**, and **Paige Carroll** worked at the Provident Insurance Company this summer. The students explored their interests in business and medicine as they helped to process dental claims. Also busy this summer were **Tonya Robinson**, **Erika Williams**, **James Harris**, and **Maletha Josey**, who volunteered their time to assist Habitat for Humanity, an organization that builds and restores houses for families in need.



University of Tennessee Career Beginner Tonya Robinson working as a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity.

**Chicago, IL**

New CBers got to meet program graduates at a June picnic held at Chicago's Grant Park. Later in the summer, CBers met and got to know prospective mentors through a board games and pizza night, a panel discussion on high school issues, and an afternoon at Wrigley Field cheering on the Chicago Cubs. The baseball game provided a well-deserved rest after CBers devoted much effort to preparing for college admissions tests.

**Gary, IN**

Indiana University, Northwest Career Beginners showed the value of working together and helping one another when they held a car wash to raise money so CBer **Eric Smoot** could fly to Florida to compete in the National Junior Olympics. At the event in July, Eric won the gold medal in the 3000 meter run. Congratulations also to **Larry Lowe**, **Jerry Martin**, **Antoine Brown**, and **Elliot Staples**, who were commended for good work in their summer jobs at the Gary Police Department.

**Des Moines, IA**

Career Beginners got a head start on decisions facing them this year by taking classes in career exploration, college orientation, and computer science at Des Moines Area Community College this summer. Through a campus activities organization open to CBers, **Nashonda Smith**, **Kamara Fowler**, **Shrise Young**, and **Adrienne Parker** traveled to Detroit, Michigan to hear the South African leader Nelson Mandela speak on the anti-Apartheid effort in his country.

**Cleveland, OH**

Case Western Reserve University Career Beginners got a first-hand look at local businesses through a Corporate Tour Day hosted by Ohio Bell Telephone, L.T.V. Steel and Society National Bank. To practice communication and leadership skills needed in the business world, CBers put on a "Style Show" in which students modeled proper dress for a variety of occasions.

**Minneapolis, MN**
**St. Paul, MN**

Several CBers visited the University of Minnesota at Crookston for an Educational Festival. Students learned about the fields of agricultural study offered at the university and also took in a horse show a bird exhibition and a dance. CBer **Matt Koch** wrote and performed his "Career Beginnings Rap" in a youth showcase at the Pillsbury Atrium. Congratulations also to **Jennifer Emmons**, **William Smith**, and **Cara Winter**, who were awarded Alan Page Scholarships.

**Bakersfield, CA**

Congratulations to **Louie Gomez**, **Yesenia De Leon** and **Edith Garibay**. All earned high praise from their employers for outstanding performance on the job this summer. The students worked in various departments at California State University, Bakersfield, where they provided clerical and administrative support. All the Bakersfield CBers celebrated work well done this summer with pizza, volleyball and softball on the last day of the summer program in August.

**Los Angeles, CA**

Eight CBers challenged themselves and the elements by embarking on the Outward Bound program in August. **Tsahi Banton**, **Alma Bueno**, **Nyla Cano**, **Violeta Rodrieguez**, **Luccio Torres**, **Mary Rojas**, **Troy Perkins**, and **Vernon O'Neal** hiked and camped for a week in Sequoia and King Canyon National Parks. Congratulations also to **Jamie Blount** and **Raynell Cross** who faced challenges of their own this summer as they traveled to Los Angeles companies in their chosen career areas.

**Santa Ana, CA**

Career Beginners visited a fireplace manufacturing plant in Santa Ana, where they observed the many uses of computers in designing and constructing fireplaces. CBers met and got to know future mentors at a barbecue in July. To celebrate the completion of six weeks of hard work on the job and in career planning classes, CBers held an Ice Cream Bash on campus at Rancho Santiago College in August.

**Tacoma, WA**

Tacoma Career Beginners discussed the skills they would need to be adequately prepared for college in a College Bound Workshop in August. At the gathering, students also learned how to use the computer program WOIS to obtain information about various colleges and careers. Congratulations to **Craig Hoffecker** who won first place in the High School Sports Writing Competition sponsored by the National Federation of Press Women.

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Coast to Coast With Career Beginnings

## About Career Beginnings

Career Beginnings is a college-business-community initiative in cities across the country designed to build on the demonstrated potential of high school students to overcome difficulties and achieve.

Annually, Career Beginnings provides more than 2,000 students with: (1) the encouragement of a knowledgeable adult mentor; (2) support in exploring career and college options through educational workshops and training; (3) year-long services and guidance throughout the process of gaining admission to college or obtaining a full-time job with career potential after graduation; (4) a quality summer work experience.

The Career Beginnings Program national sponsors include The Commonwealth Fund, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, The Gannett Foundation, Inc., Melville Corporation, Aetna Life and Casualty, and Wilsons. Career Beginnings is guided by a National Advisory Committee. The Program is managed nationally by the Center for Corporate and Education Initiatives, a department of Brandeis University's Heller School, located in Waltham, Massachusetts.

**Cover Photos:**
Indiana University, N.W. Career Beginner Eric Smoot; Chicago Career Beginners Arturo Zaragoza and Paola Aguilar (Photo by Caroline O'Boyle); University of Tennessee Career Beginner Paige Carroll, seated, organizes mail at Provident Life Insurance Company with Lisa Henley, dental claims clerk (Photo by Florence Reilly).

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